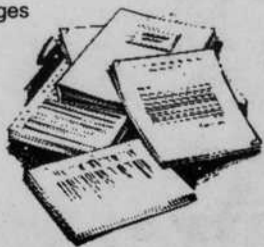


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Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

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Torrey eager for another term

■ Mayor Jim Torrey is ready to tackle issues that continue to plague the city and future goals

By Sara Lieberth
Oregon Daily Emerald

Eugene Mayor James D. Torrey believes his city has made tremendous progress over the years but acknowledges several issues still needing improvement in the place he's called home since 1965. By announcing his bid for reelection last month, Torrey would like to remain at the helm and implement his four-point plan for Eugene's future from his office at City Hall.

Born in North Dakota, Torrey, 59, came to Oregon to attend the 8th grade in Waldport, where he subsequently graduated from high school. After a stint in the grocery business and a move into advertising for a year in Washington state, Torrey returned south and settled in Eugene to raise a family. It was then that, he said, a penchant for public service was first sparked in him — though it came first through little league baseball.

"That is the main reason that I'm in public service," he said. "I'm the mayor because I started coaching kids."

In those early years, Torrey would attend city budget committee meetings and petition for funds to acquire areas in which local children could play. The unique needs of children, he said, have always been at the forefront of his political goals.

"I truly believe that if a city can be a very good place for a child to live, it will be a good place for everybody to live," he said.

Looking over a typical week's schedule for Torrey seems to support this. He regularly reads books to kindergartners as part of a reading program he instituted, meets

with high school students and discusses civics with gradeschoolers.

Logging in an average of 55 hours per week with mayoral duties, Torrey also is a 50 percent owner with his wife, Kathy, of their advertising company, Total Communications. Proud of their close-knit family, the Torreys have three grown children and three grandchildren.



TORREY

Torrey looks forward to working out the kinks of several still-pressing issues.

First, he said, many children in the community would benefit from after-school programs, and he has requested a \$75,000 matching grant from the city. He estimated that 70-90 kids are currently attending a daily meals program at Westmoreland Community Center that didn't exist a few years ago.

Second on his list is the growth issue, a contested topic among local constituents.

"How do we deal with the confines of the urban growth boundary?" he asked. "We want to zealously protect the green spaces around our community, so it means we have to grow up," he said.

Providing enough services to a city the size of Eugene costs money, he said, and requires balancing the bringing-in of well-paying job opportunities as Hyundai and Levi-Strauss have recently.

"We need the tax money they provide," Torrey said. "And we have a high-quality work force, but we have to balance the impact with the benefits."

And finally, he indicated that an extensive transportation system must be addressed as Eugene moves into the 21st century.

"No one wants to pay more gas taxes," he said. "But roads have to be maintained and new ones built, so we have to look for solutions."

Looking for answers and toward the future, the mayor again stressed his desire to strike balance among the wildly divergent political views of the community.

"What I believe a mayor has to do, regardless of who that mayor is, is to walk that balance and not allow yourself to be taken to the polar extremes," he said. "So as to continue to have what I am absolutely convinced is the best city around."

Joining Torrey in the bid for Eugene mayor, having officially filed with the city recorder, are Uriah Murray, a 21-year-old student at the Cascade Institute of Massage Therapy, Lazar Makyadath, owner of Lazar's Bazaar, and the latest to enter, retired railroad yard master James Whestine.

Whestine, who ran against Torrey in the last mayoral race, decided to seek the office again. He said he is not surprised by the mayor's reelection plan after forming an exploratory committee to look into a run for the state legislature.

"Jim's reentry is predictable," Whestine said. "Campaign money is hard to come by, but he has a lot of supporters. I think he's done a good job of doing what he said he would because he is an honorable man. I consider him a friend."

Unable to attend Wednesday's State-of-the-City address, Makyadath said he is eager to hear his fellow candidate's assessment of the city's progress and prognosis.

"I'd like to see his report card," he said. "I think everybody is excited about the coming year's election. It looks like it will be a clean race; it will be a good one for sure."

State of city

continued from page 1A

ly delivered and best-received goals for the next year came at the end of his speech when he advocated expanding youth services.

"No State-of-the-City speech would be complete if I didn't have a youth issue, and I've got a youth

issue," Torrey said. "We have children in this community whom we are letting down. We have lots of kids who need a safe place to be after school."

Torrey announced plans to create a task force of city and education officials to brainstorm possible city-funded activities for students to utilize after school, during weekends and over summer vacations.

"All of us have a responsibility to put our hand out and help our children," he said.

During his recognition of community service, Torrey thanked several city employees and private citizens for taking that responsibility into their own hands. He applauded expanded services for student parents, increasing city funding programs and the formation of the Youth Council, a panel of Eugene high school students that discusses youth issues with City Council.

Next, Oregon's First Lady Sharon Kitzhaber approached the podium and awarded two Eugene teens with plaques for their presentations in local middle schools for Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex, (STARS) a program advo-

cating abstinence.

"This is representative of one of the many good things kids are doing today," Kitzhaber said. "STARS is an up-front program. Abstinence is a powerful and important message for this age group."

Torrey's second major goal for the coming year was to improve the police station, located in the basement of City Hall, or to move the force to a new location. The current station, which doesn't meet earthquake-proof standards, "is not safe and shouldn't be left there," he said.

Torrey also called on the city to "continue making Eugene the place we all want to be" by settling differences and resolving issues surrounding transportation planning, land-use courthes, a possible new federal courthouse, stricter clean water laws and new public safety programs.

Looking back on the year, Torrey recognized the dedication of a new library, the near-completion of the Ferry St. Bridge renovation and the prevention of Y2K problems.

"Y2K came and went, and to my knowledge the only machine that malfunctioned was the fax machine in my office," he said.

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